United Nations E/CN.4/2003/73–E/CN.6/2003/5

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
13 December 2002

Original: English

Commission on Human Rights
Fifty-ninth session
17 March-25 April 2003
Item 12 of the provisional agenda
Integration of the human rights of women and the gender perspective*

Commission on the Status of Women
Forty-seventh session
3-14 March 2003
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system**

Joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint work plan of the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the year 2003, as well as an assessment of the implementation of the work plan for 2002. It is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/50 of 23 April 2002.

* E/CN.4/2003/1.
** E/CN.6/2003/1.

02-75223 (E) 210103

I. Introduction

1. Based on Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint work plan is prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (the work plan for 2002 is contained in document E/CN.4/2002/82-E/CN.6/2002/6). In its resolution 2002/50 of 23 April 2002, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed the cooperation and coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights, and also welcomed the joint work plan, encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure its implementation and to continue to elaborate the plan, and requested that it be made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session. The present report has been prepared in accordance with that request.

II. Assessment of the implementation of the current work plan

2. During the implementation of the current joint work plan, the exchange of information between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued.

3. In the course of the year, the Division continued to suggest experts on women's rights for the Office's training activities with respect to reporting under international human rights instruments, as well as a number of other training and technical cooperation activities. The Division also continued to work closely with the Support Services Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner on reporting and other matters relating to human rights treaty bodies. The Division and the Office continued to exchange documents, reports and information relating to the work of the human rights treaty bodies and circulated those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. The Office of the High Commissioner continued to provide information for and comments on the reports provided by the Division to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee. The Office facilitated the attendance of the Chief of the Support Services Branch at the twenty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (14 January-1 February 2002). A staff member of the Office of the High Commissioner also attended the seminar of the members of the Committee held in Lund, Sweden, from 22 to 24 April 2002 to discuss its working methods.

4. The Division contributed actively to and participated in the meeting of persons chairing treaty bodies organized by the Office of the High Commissioner from 24 to 26 June 2002 in Geneva. The Division was also fully involved in preparing and drafting background documentation for the first inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies, held in Geneva from 26 to 28 June. Both meetings were chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and two other members of that Committee also participated in the inter-committee meeting. Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in workshops, organized by the Office

of the High Commissioner, on reporting under human rights treaties as well as in other activities sponsored by the Office. Two members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women participated in the day of general discussion held by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at its twenty-eighth session (29 April-17 May 2002) on the equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights (article 3 of the Covenant). In follow-up to her discussion with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its twenty-sixth session, the Chairperson of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights held discussions at the Committee's twenty-eighth session, on the draft General Comment of the Committee on article 3 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on further collaboration, including the possible adoption of the draft as a joint General Comment of the two Committees, as was recommended by the first inter-committee meeting.

5. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate closely with regard to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A staff member of the Office of the High Commissioner was seconded to the Division for the Advancement of Women, from November 2001 to March 2002, to assist in setting up procedures in connection with the Optional Protocol. Staff members of the Division attended several meetings of the Human Rights Committee at its seventy-fourth session (New York, 18 March-5 April 2002), during which communications were considered. In addition, two staff members of the Division were trained in the handling of communications by the Petitions Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner in December 2002. The Division provided input to the revision of fact sheet 7 on complaint procedures, which was published by the Office of the High Commissioner in 2002. The Division and the Office continued to enhance the updating and coordination of their databases and web sites.

6. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. The Division supported and contributed to the work of the non-conventional human rights mechanisms, in particular the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of migrants and on the situation of human rights and freedoms of indigenous people. The Office and the Division also facilitated the attendance of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on adequate housing at the exceptional session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (5-23 August 2002), as well as the participation of several Committee members in additional consultations with the Special Rapporteur regarding his mandate and, in particular, the study on women and adequate housing requested by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2002/49 of 23 April 2002. The Division is finalizing, with the collaboration of the Office, a review of the integration of women's rights and gender perspectives in the reports of the non-conventional mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights between 1996 and 2002.

7. Cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued with respect to the Commission on Human Rights. The chairpersons of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed the

Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session (18 March-26 April 2002). The Director of the Division also attended that session.

8. Coordination in respect of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. The Division contributed to reports submitted by the Office of the High Commissioner to the Commission on Human Rights, in particular with respect to women and housing and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. The Office contributed to reports prepared by the Division for the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, trafficking in women and girls, crimes against women committed in the name of honour, the elimination of violence against women and follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The Division and the Office of the High Commissioner continued their efforts to streamline reporting to intergovernmental bodies.

9. The Division for the Advancement of Women was consulted on the workshop on promotion and protection of reproductive rights through the work of national human rights institutions for Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada, organized in San José from 14 to 16 May 2002 by the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Population Fund. The Office of the High Commissioner was consulted on the expert group meeting on trafficking in women and girls, organized by the Division, in collaboration with the Office on Drugs and Crime, in Glen Cove, United States of America, from 18 to 22 November 2002.

10. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to cooperate in efforts to follow up on the commitments regarding women's rights and the adoption of a gender perspective contained in the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 31 August-7 September 2001). As part of such efforts, the Office of the High Commissioner is preparing, in collaboration with the Division, a revised and expanded version of the 2001 publication entitled "Gender dimensions of racial discrimination" produced for the Conference. The Division and the Office facilitated the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Director of the Division in a panel on combating racism and promoting women's rights, chaired by the Deputy High Commissioner and organized jointly by the Office of the High Commissioner and the non-governmental organization Women's Caucus during the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

11. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner contributed actively to the inter-agency process led by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to prepare the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2002/1154), mandated by Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The Office of the Special Adviser, the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner collaborated within the context of the United Nations Development Group in efforts to provide terms of

reference and recruit gender and human rights specialists for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

12. Both the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner participated actively in the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (26 February-1 March 2002) under the leadership of the Special Adviser. Representatives of the Division and the Office collaborated in providing expertise on women's rights to the World Bank, making presentations at its annual conference on gender and law, in May 2002, and following up with meetings between World Bank officials and staff members of the Division and the Office. A World Bank gender and legal specialist observed the exceptional session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

III. Joint work plan for 2003

13. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women on the work of treaty bodies will continue in 2003. This will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies, as well as the regular circulation of those documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. Efforts will continue to ensure that the electronic database covering all six treaty bodies is kept updated and is fully operational and accessible to both the Division and the Office. The web sites of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will be improved further, including through the development of a more comprehensive page on women's rights on the web site of the Office of the High Commissioner. The Division and the Office will share information on and coordinate planned technical cooperation activities, as well as cooperating whenever possible in such activities. Cooperation will continue in respect of training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will continue to cooperate in the creation of multimedia training packages on international human rights instruments, starting with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol.

14. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to facilitate interaction between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies with a view to enhancing the integration of gender perspectives into their work, including with regard to general comments. The Division will continue to monitor progress in the work of treaty bodies with respect to integrating gender perspectives and will provide gender-specific input for their work. The Division will update the study conducted in 1998 on integrating gender perspectives into the work of the human rights treaty bodies (HRI/MC/1998/6).

15. Cooperation will continue between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner with regard to the Optional Protocol. Staff of the Office and the Division will continue to collaborate in the exchange of information with regard to communications and inquiry procedures. The Office and the Division will work to organize regular interaction between members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and

members of other human rights treaty bodies dealing with communications and inquiry procedures, as well as between their respective secretariats.

16. The Office of the High Commissioner will participate in selected meetings organized by the Division. The Division will contribute to and participate in selected meetings of human rights bodies and other meetings organized by the Office of the High Commissioner. In particular, the Division will be involved in the preparation and execution of the meeting of human rights chairpersons in 2003. The Division will also be actively involved in consultations between the High Commissioner and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the proposed new streamlined reporting procedures, his recommendations on which are to be submitted to the Secretary-General by September 2003 in accordance with the report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387 and Corr.1, paras. 52-54 and action 3).

17. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to provide targeted input for the work of extra-conventional human rights mechanisms, in particular the special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of violence against women, the human rights of migrants, the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the right to adequate housing, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division will work together to organize a workshop on the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the thematic mandates during 2003, based on the review conducted by the Division in 2002.

18. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will support and facilitate cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. This will include the participation of the chairpersons of the Commissions and senior staff of the Division and the Office at sessions of the Commissions, meetings of the bureaux and exchanges of information on working methods and actions taken by the Commissions. In addition, the Division and the Office will encourage the holding of a teleconference between the bureaux of the two Commissions in 2003.

19. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will cooperate in the preparation of reports on similar issues to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies, such as those relating to traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls, trafficking in women and girls, violence against women and violence against women migrant workers. The Division will continue to cooperate with the Office in disseminating the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking (E/2002/68/Add.1), which the High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Economic and Social Council in May 2002, to provide guidance to States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society in their efforts to combat trafficking in women and girls.

20. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will jointly organize a meeting of national human rights institutions and national machineries for the advancement of women on strategies to address the elimination of sex discrimination, with the participation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

21. The Division will continue to contribute to the follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, such as by seeking to ensure that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women takes into account the recommendations of the Conference during its review of reports of States parties. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division will finalize in 2003 their joint publication on the gender dimensions of racial discrimination reflecting the outcome and follow-up to the Conference.

22. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including in respect of activities related to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and follow-up to the Secretary-General's study on women, peace and security.

23. The Office of the High Commissioner will collaborate with the Division for the Advancement of Women in organizing substantive consultations on the integration of the gender perspective in the draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies that will be tested by the Office of the High Commissioner in 2003.